

AGENDA: July 8, 2003

7.1

CATEGORY: New Business

DEPT.: City Manager

TITLE: Proposed Relocation of California Air
National Guard 129th Rescue Wing

RECOMMENDATION

Authorize the Mayor to submit letters to the Governor and appropriate California National Guard command staff opposing the proposed relocation of the California Air National Guard 129th Rescue Wing from Moffett Federal Airfield to Castle Airport in Atwater.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact directly associated with the approval of the above-listed recommendation.

It is anticipated that the proposed relocation of the 129th Rescue Wing will result in an approximate \$19.2 million annual economic loss to Santa Clara County. No data is available to determine how much of the annual economic loss would be felt in the City of Mountain View and community.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

The California Air National Guard 129th Rescue Wing (129th RQW), currently based at Moffett Federal Airfield, provides the following important functions in support of its Federal and State missions:

- Conducts combat and research operations on a worldwide basis.
- Conducts peacetime search and rescue operations.
- Responds to State emergencies such as natural disasters.
- Assists civil authorities in the enforcement of laws.

The City of Mountain View has long considered the 129th RQW's presence at Moffett Federal Airfield as important and beneficial to its residents, California and the nation.

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The California Air National Guard recently released a draft environmental assessment (EA) for the proposed relocation of the 129th RQW from Moffett Federal Airfield to Castle Airport in Atwater. The 129th RQW is citing increasing tenant costs at Moffett Federal Airfield, as well as high housing prices in the Bay Area, as reasons for the proposed relocation.

Staff has reviewed the draft EA and has identified some potentially significant concerns with the cost comparison analysis portion of the draft EA that could seriously compromise or perhaps invalidate some of the conclusions reached in the draft EA regarding the perceived benefits of relocating the 129th RQW from Moffett Federal Airfield to Castle Airport. These issues/concerns are more fully described in the proposed letter of opposition to the relocation attached to this report (Attachment 1).

In addition to opposing the proposed relocation of the 129th RQW, based on concerns regarding the completeness and accuracy of the draft EA, the letter further explains that the City is opposed to the proposed relocation of the 129th RQW because of the critical role the 129th RQW plays in supporting local, State and Federal law enforcement and antiterrorism efforts.

The letter also articulates the City's longstanding support for the 129th RQW's presence at Moffett Federal Airfield and the City Council's previously stated concern that the departure of the 129th RQW from Moffett Field could undermine Moffett's continued status as a secure airport facility and lead to proposals for other uses for the runways and other Moffett facilities used by the 129th RQW. These other uses may be much more intrusive and less compatible with the community and the land use and development plans NASA Ames Research Center currently has for Moffett Airfield.

City Council review and input into the proposed letter is requested so that the letter can be finalized and submitted within the 30-day comment period for the draft EA.

Staff will continue to communicate with appropriate/interested parties during the remainder of the environmental review process to ensure that the City's position of opposition to the proposed relocation of the 129th RQW from Moffett Federal Airfield to Castle Airport is known to decision-makers.

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PUBLIC NOTICING

In addition to distributing copies of this report in accordance with the City's standard agenda posting requirements, copies of this report were sent to 129th RQW command staff, the City of Sunnyvale, Congresswoman Anna Eshoo's office and NASA Ames Research Center.

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LF/9/CAM
601-07-08-03M^

Attachment: 1. Proposed Letter